

Hazrat Maulana Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani Sahab (may his blessings remain on us for a long time),
Vice Principal Darul Uloom Karachi

Memories

(Episode 3)

The topic will not be complete without mentioning a few more special qualities of *Bhai Jaan* (Hazrat Muhammad Zaki Kaifi (may Allah Ta'ala's Mercy be upon him)), especially that out of all of us brothers he alone had the good fortune of being in the service and company, and even doing Baiy'ah, with Hakeem Ul Ummah Hazrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Sahab Thanwi (may his secret be sanctified). Our respected father (may Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) used to take him to Thana Bhawan every year, and Hazrat Thanwi (may Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) also used to love him. Several times Hazrat gave him the opportunity to massage his head. Hazrat was not used to eating *Paan* but sometimes he would eat a plain one without *katha* (catechu) and *chuna* (slaked lime) after a meal. *Bhai Jaan* would often make a well-timed offer of *Paan* to Hazrat due to which Hazrat had humourously named him "*Paani*"¹. Whenever Hazrat desired to have a *Paan* and *Bhai Jaan* was not nearby Hazrat would say: "Where did our Paani go?" A great blessing that *Bhai Jaan* received was that one day he requested Hazrat: "Please teach me *Pand Nama-e-Attar*". How would Hazrat (may Allah Ta'ala' mercy be upon him) have the time to teach *Pand Nama* to a small boy? But due to his extraordinary love and care for *Bhai Jaan* he replied: "I don't have any other time, but after Asar I go for a walk. You can come with me with the book at that time. I will teach you *Pand Nama* in that free time."

Thus *Bhai Jaan* came to Hazrat after Asar with the book and the lessons began. At that time senior Khulafa of Hazrat were also present and when they got the news of this lesson they felt envious, and they also sought permission to attend this lesson. Hazrat gave permission. Thereafter my respected father, Hazrat Maulana Mufti Muhammad Hasan Sahab, Hazrat Maulana Khair Muhammad Sahab and Hazrat Doctor Abdul Hayy Sahab (may Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon them all) also participated in those heart-warming lessons, and this continued throughout Ramadan. Hazrat Mufti Muhammad Hasan Sahab (may Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) would often remind *Bhai Jaan* about those lessons and would say: "You are our classmate and due to you we received the good fortune of learning *Pand Nama* from Hazrat."

When *Bhai Jaan* learnt how to write our respected father (may Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) asked him to write his first letter to Hazrat Hakeem Ul Ummah (may Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him). The reply to this letter which Hazrat bestowed upon him was a lesson in itself and also a great fortune for *Bhai Jaan*. Hazrat replied: "Dear son (May Allah Ta'ala keep you safe). Assalamualaikum with dua. I was pleased to see your writing. I make dua for your progress in terms of knowledge and action. Make your handwriting cleaner. It will be easier to read for the reader and with this intention you will also get

¹ "Paani" actually means "water" in Urdu but Hazrat humourously meant "the one with the Paan".

reward. See! I'm making you a Sufi from your childhood! For headache put this amulet on your head. Peace and prayers for your entire household. Ashraf Ali."

Common people will think that what is the relationship between making one's handwriting more legible and Tasawwuf? But this was a specialty of Hakeem Ul Ummah (may Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) that he would remind his associates about the most important demands of Shariah and Tariqah (Tasawwuf) which is the etiquettes of social life, good character and having clean and clear dealings with others. This was at a time when people used to consider these essential branches of Islam as having nothing to do with Islam. Also, Hazrat never admonished his associates if they became lazy in daily recitations or supererogatory prayers (nawafil) but would take strict action against someone who lapsed in social behavior or in dealing with others, or did something which caused harm to others.

It was due to the effects of this teaching of Hazrat that *Bhai Jaan* would take extra precaution not to harm anyone due to any of his actions.

The event of *Bhai Jaan* becoming Baiy'ah to Hakeem Ul Ummah is also strange. *Bhai Jaan* had not reached puberty by that time, but looking at the love and kindness he received from Hazrat he one day himself requested Hazrat for Baiy'ah. Hazrat normally did not do Baiy'ah to someone who had not reached puberty, so he humourously told *Bhai Jaan*: "Baiy'ah is not done for free, bring some guava then I'll accept your Baiy'ah". In that season guavas were not available in the market so Hazrat had said this to avert him and thought that he would not be able to bring a guava. But *Bhai Jaan* brought a guava, from God knows where. Hazrat was surprised to see the guava but since he had promised, he agreed to accept the request for Baiy'ah. But who can observe the laws of Shariah to the level of Hazrat? *Bhai Jaan* had not reached puberty by that time, and it is not permissible to accept a gift from one who had not reached puberty without his/her parents' permission. So he sent *Bhai Jaan* to ask his parents' permission to gift the guava to Hazrat. *Bhai Jaan* took permission from his parents, thereafter Hazrat did Baiy'ah.

After this event on 7th Rabee' Ath-Thanee 1356H our respected father wrote a letter to Hazrat Hakeem Ul Ummah in which he wrote:

All praise is for Allah, the blessings of Muhammad Zaki (may Allah Ta'ala protect him) becoming your Mureed have become manifestly evident in that he has become very motivated to offer prayers. Previously he used to sleep at the time of Isha prayer but now he waits for it."

Hakeem Ul Ummah wrote in reply:

"Mashallah! Please make dua that I also receive the blessings of this sinless child, and get motivation for action, and steadfastness and sincerity."

Many important matters related to *Bhai Jaan's* life were decided on the advices of Hazrat Hakeem Ul Ummah. Our respected father wrote to Hazrat Hakeem Ul Ummah in the letter sent on 10th Rajab 1355H:

“It has been more than one year that we started Muhammad Zaki (may Allah Ta’ala protect him) to start memorization of the Quran. Now he has been sick for almost six months. Now some relatives are suggesting that he is not able to tolerate the hard work involved in memorizing the Quran. I’m deeply perplexed as to what I should do.”

Hazrat replid:

“If Zaki were my son I would stop his memorization of Quran. Then later in life if he had the energy (even if after finishing his studies) then I would get him to complete the memorization of the Quran. It would be much easier at that time.”

Thus *Bhai Jaan* continued to benefit from the guidance and kindnesses of Hazrat Hakeem Ul Ummah until the age of eighteen. Once during this time our respected father wanted to send a letter to Hazrat Thanvi, and wanted it to reach Hazrat the same day. On the other hand there was no possibility to catch the train from Saharanpur to Thana Bhawan. *Bhai Jaan* took this responsibility upon himself. He travelled from Deoband to Muzaffarnagar, and from Muzaffarnagar to Shamli. He expected to catch the train from Shamli to Thana Bhawan but the train had already left by the time he reached. *Bhai Jaan* rented a bicycle and travelled the long distance from Shamli to Thana Bhawan on that bicycle, and presented the letter to Hazrat on time.

Besides Hazrat Thanwi, in Deoband Hazrat Miyan Sahab (Hazrat Maulana Sayyad Asghar Husain Sahab) would also be very kind to *Bhai Jaan*, and *Bhai Jaan* also got many opportunities to spend time in his service and company. He had great eagerness to benefit from the service and company of pious elders from his childhood. He really deserved the right to say this poem:

I have been an adorer of your beauty from the time

When my heart did not even know what love is

And it was the effect of this very company of pious elders that his personality seemed to be imbued by Deen and the correct understanding of Deen, to such an extent that he would not be affected or awed by any environment, rather he would be the one to exude a good impact on others in whichever environment he was in:

The story of love and loyalty receive their exuberant colour from me

Such that I threw the colour of my loyalty on your face

The fourth one was our sister Haseeba Khatoon² (may Allah Ta’ala have mercy on her) whom we used to call “Bibi Jaan”, and the fifth one is respected Raqeebah Khatoon (may her shade remain on us for a long time) whom we call *Chhoti Aapa*. Both of them were much older than me but they were not married at that time, and they made me so frank with them that despite the big age difference we had a relationship like friends. The entire universe of education for these sisters was also the *maktab* of aunt

² I have mentioned about her in some detail in Al-Balagh at her passing away, which has also been published in my book “Naqoosh-e-Raftagan”

Amatul Hannan Sahiba (about which I will write later Inshallah) and at home it was limited to “Bahishti Zewar”. However, due to the excellent upbringing provided by our respected father (may Allah Ta’ala have mercy on him) their knowledgeability and literary disposition were definitely much more than those ladies who were university graduates. They had also read widely, and not only did they have an excellent understanding of literature they themselves would say high quality poems. As an example, take a look at the following poem of the elder one of them, respected Haseeba Khatoon Sahiba Marhooma:

Tears come to us at the thought of the future of the garden

Why do they laugh, Oh Garden! I don’t know

They are passing by my house without salam and greetings

Why do they seem annoyed? I don’t know

And this poem of respected Raqeeba Khatoon Sahiba (may her shade be on us for a long time):

They moistened despite my restraining my sorrow

At last, the eyes were defeated by the heart

Listening to my story of grief

At last, the moon and the stars fell asleep

At this young age most of my time used to be spent with these two sisters of mine, as they were made responsible for me, from changing my clothes to fulfilling my whims and fancies. Their companionship had put a seed for literary flavour in me from that small age, which I will further describe later on Inshallah.

After them was respected Muhammad Razi Usmani (may Allah Ta’ala have mercy on him) who used to study in the Persian grade at Darul Uloom Deoband. He was, by nature, not only fond of children but he even understood the intricacies of their psychology. He had spoiled me and would try to fulfill all my wishes. We three younger brothers used to call him “Bhai Razi” (brother Razi), and I, in my lisping speech, “Bhai Laji”. But if ever he would not be able to fulfill my wish I would display my displeasure by removing the word “Bhai” (brother) when calling him, and would take his bare name, and would call out in anger: “Laji”!

Once he came to know that I become happy at seeing pigeons. A friend of his, who was a nephew of Allama Shabbir Ahmad Usmani (may Allah Ta’ala have mercy on him) had some pet pigeons. Perhaps Bhai Sahab had requested him to bring a pigeon for me. Thus one day he came to our door with a pigeon in his hand. Bhai Sahab happily took me to the door, and when I saw the pigeon and came to know it was for me, my happiness had no bounds, and I remember that childhood happiness until today.

May Allah Ta'ala make Bhai Sahab the recipient of His complete forgiveness. He himself was of a small age at that time. Sometimes he would make different pictures on a paper to make me happy. One day he drew a picture of a guava ("*amrood*" in Urdu), lemon ("*leemoon*"), a bird ("*chirya*"), a donkey ("*gadha*") and a crow ("*kawwa*"). Perhaps I had somehow got to know that our father would become displeased at drawing pictures of animate beings. Thus if I ever became angry with him I would say in my lisping tongue: "*Amlood, Neemoon, Chilya, Dadha, Tawwa*" (Amrood, Leemoon, Chirya, Gadha, Kawwa). Perhaps this included a surreptitious threat that if you don't please me I will tell our father that he had made pictures of a bird, a donkey and a crow. Eventually this became a curse phrase for me, and not only for him, rather whoever I became displeased with I would angrily say to him: "*Amlood, Neemoon, Chilya, Dadha, Tawwa*". This was my worst curse which I would shout at any child who fought with me.

May Allah Ta'ala shower his forgiveness and pleasure at brother Razi. His intense love for me was such that when our respected father was invited to teach Bukhari Shareef at Darul Uloom Dabhel in the place of Shaykhul Islam Hazrat Maulana Shabeer Ahmad Usmani (may His secret be sanctified), our respected father also took brother Razi along with him to Dabhel. They stayed in Dabhel for several months. During this time he would remain grieved at remembering me, and in the article he wrote in Al-Balagh at the death of our respected father he wrote:

"This lowly one used to learn how to read the Noble Quran in those days, and had got admission there in the Quran class. I used to remain quiet after Madrasa. Neither did I have interest in eating, nor in anything else. And the real reason for this was that today's Maulana Muhammad Taqi Usmani, the director of Al-balagh, was two to two-and-a-half years old then. This lowly one had such love for him that in Deoband it used to be difficult to remain away from him for even one hour. Thus even in Dabhel I used to remember him all the time, and not being able to do anything about it, I would write his name on the walls of the Madrasa (Mufti-e-A'zam number 1044:2)

One great sacrifice of Bhai Sahab was that after migrating to Pakistan there was nobody else to help our respected father. He was the only one who was of age to be able to help in any work-related activity. Thus, after initial education, he became the manager of our respected father's bookstore Darul Isha'at and became dedicated for this purpose. A result of this was that he could not continue his education, but due to his love for reading he continued increasing his knowledge, with the Grace of Allah Ta'ala, until his last moments. And even in practical life he was enviable for many for his religious knowledge. He had great enthusiasm to visit the Haramain Shareefain and would visit for Hajj or Umrah almost every year.

Then at number seven is respected Muhammad Wali Razi Sahab (may his shade be extended). At that time he was memorizing the Quran at Darul Uloom Deoband. Allah Ta'ala had blessed him with the qualities of intelligence and wisdom, wittiness and humour. When he entered the terrain of poetry, he made for himself a distinguished position in this field. When he entered the field of teaching, he changed the lives of many while teaching Islamic Studies at Karachi Grammar School and Karachi University. When he did M.A. in English he translated several Islamic books into English with this skill. The books "From Bible to Quran" and "Qadianism on Trial" were rendered into English by his pen. Al-Balagh English continues to be released under his supervision even now. The masterpiece of his

intelligence and wittiness, his book “The guide of the world” (peace be upon him) has now become famous throughout the world. He has written the entire Seerat (biography and qualities of character) of the Noble Messenger (peace be upon him) such that there is no dot in the entire book. This book of almost four hundred pages is devoid of dots. This is so special that it would not be wrong to call it a world record. In the introduction of this book I have mentioned some details regarding how difficult it is to write a long text, especially about the life of the Noble Messenger (peace be upon him), in Urdu language. But he completed this amazing task, with the special help from Allah Ta’ala, in just a few months and made a record. Several others of his books and articles are a mirror of the vastness of his study, and his knowledgeability and literary disposition. Allah Ta’ala has made him extremely humble and an embodiment of simplicity. Far away from fame and name, he continues to serve the Deen and knowledge of Deen through his articles.

At number eight my elder brother Hazrat Maulana Mufti Muhammad Rafee’ Sahab Usmani (may his shade be elongated) is seven years older than me, but Allah Ta’ala kept us together from our childhood such that not only in the household, but even in religious and national circles our names are taken together. From all our brothers and sisters I got the honour of the longest companionship with him, from which I learnt a lot. However, my disorderly nature caused much hindrance in implementing what I learnt. He lives a very organized and principled life, while I am unsystematic and disorganized. He does everything with tranquility and in an honored manner, while I am hasty. Everything of his, from his house to office is systematic while I am haphazard. The patience with which he has tolerated my foolishnesses is a testament to his resoluteness. His forbearance and loftiness did not let this difference in natures, which is mainly due to my haphazard way of life, become a noteworthy cause of distress. And it is due to the eminence of his character that Alhamdulillah I got the opportunity to benefit from him with almost complete harmony, and received his kindness from the time we were studying, when doing Ifta (i.e. specializing in Fiqh), and then in national matters. The Ulama (Islamic scholars), after the demise of Hazrat Mufti Wali Hasan Sahab (May Allah Ta’ala have mercy on him), conferred upon him the title of Grand Mufti of Pakistan. And his writings in Urdu and Arabic, Fatawa, and his organized, clear and balanced lectures, and his talks are an unbiased witness to the appropriateness of this title. Today if a list of considerate, balanced, sincere, and those scholars who provide valuable opinions is made, then Alhamdulillah his name is at the top of the list. Today every nook and cranny of Darul Uloom is a witness to the extent to which he spent his physical and mental energies for the building and progress of Darul Uloom. If I were to say that each and every building of Darul Uloom, except one or two, was built under his direct supervision, and he spent effort for each brick that was used, then most likely this would not be an exaggeration. May Allah Ta’ala keep his shade of mercy on us, with complete ‘aafiyat. He is like a kind and merciful father, not only for me but to the entire family and Darul Uloom. And his efforts for the country and Ummah are unforgettable.